

II Timothy, Sermon #29

II Timothy 4—

How many of you know that church has moved into the entertainment business—in the business of amusing people?

Let me read you a quote:

Lately, the church has grown tired of the abuse and given over the struggle.

- She appears to have decided that if she cannot conquer the great god entertainment, she may as well join forces with him and make what use she can of his power.
- So today, we have an astonishing spectacle of millions of dollars being poured into the unholy job of providing earthly entertainment for the so-called sons of Heaven and hardly a man dares to raise his voice against it.

A.W. Tozer in the 1950s (60 years ago)

I want to preach today against that spirit.

Vs. 1-2 – preaching that pleases God

Vs. 3-4 – preaching that pleases man

Two parts—what God wants, what man wants

II Timothy 4

Let us stand for the reading of God's Holy Word.

II Timothy 4:1-4

Let us pray.

You may be seated.

Preaching that Pleases Man

The neon sign of this passage is “**preach the Word**”

Scripture must be preached—only one verse (vs. 2)—deals with preaching the Word.

Vs.2

- Be instant, ready—like a microwave
- Preach when it is popular and when it's not

The tone of preaching

Verses 1, 3 & 4 give reasons for preaching the Word.

- Vs. 1 – the return of Jesus Christ is one of the reasons for preaching the Word.
- The second reason for preaching the Word is in Vs. 3

Vs. 3 – “for” = a reason = preach the Word because . . .

There's a time coming when church people are going to have ear problems

Verses 3 and 4 tell of the response of nominal Christians to the preaching of God's Word.

God gives us four points about their response

- #1 – they will not endure (vs. 3)
- #2 – they shall heap (vs. 3)
- #3 – they shall turn away (vs. 4)
- #4 – they shall turn unto fables (vs. 4)

Fourfold response of nominal believers – Why do I call these people nominal Christians?

- Nominal means in name only
- A nominal Christian does what he wants instead of what God wants.

- Verse 3 describes people who are under the sound of preaching and being under it, they leave it. They don't want to hear it.

We are talking about professing Christians—they, believers in the church

#1 – They will not endure, eventually they would come to reject solid Bible preaching

- “Endure” has the basic idea of holding up or holding onto.
- This implies that sound doctrine sometimes demands endurance—every Christian knows that—mental, physical, spiritual—endurance.

In Nehemiah 8:3 – people stood – till noon

- Nehemiah 9:3 – 1/4 part of the day—three-hour sermon (Moldova, Chinese pastors)—endurance
- People know what it was to be under it.

Physical Endurance for the length of a sermon; for a week of Revival Services.

Hebrews 13:22, *“And I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation: for I have written a letter unto you in few words.”*

- Suffer the Word of exhortation
- “Suffer” is same word as endure

II Peter 3:16 (Peter writing about the Apostles' epistles)—hard to be understood

- Difficult—powerful to the mind
- Doctrine throws you to the ground when we wrestle with it—hypostatic union, Trinity, eschatology
- Maturity is needed

They will not endure Sound Doctrine

- Sound = healthy preaching and teaching
- “Sound” means to be healthy, and is the term from which we derive “hygiene.”

Timothy and all preachers and teachers after him were to be true to God's Word—to “the sacred writings” (3:15), to God-breathed “Scripture” (v. 16).

It is because the Bible contradicts ungodly living that the Bible is unacceptable and intolerable to those who persist in sin.

Those who live contrary to the Bible resent and resist the teaching of Scripture.

Why will people not endure sound preaching? They love sin.

- Sound preaching confronts and rebukes sin
- And people who love sinful lifestyles will not tolerate it.
- These people won't stand up for it
- They will want to find someone who doesn't demand so much of their mind, will, or body
- They will leave the sound doctrine

★What happens to people who will not endure sound doctrine? – Vs. 3

After their own lusts – they shall heap to themselves—picture of scoop shovel

- According to their own lusts—their private desires—preferences—personal cravings
- Some like fiery, eloquent, soft, positive, hunting for preaching that they want

Not surprisingly, therefore, such nominal Christians **will accumulate for themselves** ungodly **teachers in accordance to their own** ungodly **desires**.

“If people desire a calf to worship, a ministerial calf-maker is readily found.”

This philosophy undermines Biblical Christianity to make the consumer satisfied—the churchgoer happy. Give us a religion that will not disrupt our selfish lifestyles.

So, pastors and churches have understood this philosophy and created the new American church slogan: “Welcome – this is Burger King Bible Church where you can have it your way.”

“What you want, we will get it for you.”

“Welcome, lost people, this is Baskin Robbins Bible Church—where you can have church in 31 different flavors.”

Modern methodology turns into modern theology; the church has been made more palatable for people

- The church has become worldly.
- The whirlwinds of compromise are swirling

But God is not pleased.

★There is no room in this passage to give the people what they want

Too many derive their ministry philosophy from business marketing, from the world.

II Timothy 4:2 is the Biblical method

Our Church philosophy – we must draw it from Scripture

Vs. 3 – **They** would seek out (lit. “heap up”) **teachers**, of whom many are always available, who would tell them what they wanted to hear rather than the truth.

- These nominal Christians do this because they are a diseased people—have itching ears—refers to the people not the teachers
- Pathological condition—result of it—they are looking, not loyal, they’re looking

What makes people’s ears itch?

- Poison ivy—you scratch it and it gets worse
- These people got an itch and then scratched it and now they are scratching endlessly
- Pick at it—pick, pick, pick

People are looking for someone who agrees with them.

- How do people get this way?
- We are living in a world that contributes to itching ears.

Jeremiah 5:30-31, “[An appalling] *and horrible thing is committed in the land: The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means [their own way], and my people love to have it so . . .*”

Now, notice the dangerous condition the people come to.

Vs. 4 – They shall turn away their ears from the Truth—reality

Vs. 4 – Ultimately, they will be victims and devoid of truth. They won’t know truth nor do they want to know it; they will be left with myths.

This has happened to the church today.

- The church has lost its tolerance for Biblical preaching and the church is in serious doctrinal error – dream world.
- The church is throwing its arms open wide and embracing all viewpoints – open doors, open hearts, open minds.
- They call it dialoguing. We are going to have a dialogue on evolution.
- Christians madly pursue extra-Biblical revelations from prophets, dreams.
- Preachers deny the reality of hell.

The modern gospel promises blessings apart from holiness.

- Churches ignore the Biblical teaching on hosts of issues.
- Debating permissive lifestyles; the inspiration of the Bible; Creation; Salvation by faith in Christ alone.

Where the Bible was the divine standard for belief and for living, God’s Word is compromised.

In many churches who once preached **sound doctrine**, evils that God’s Word plainly and repeatedly condemns are touted as acceptable.

- Women are ordained to ministries the Bible restricts to men.
- Adulterers, Fornicators and Homosexuals not only are welcomed into church fellowship but also are welcomed into the pulpit.

Instead of receiving **sound doctrine**, such churches fiercely reject it, **wanting** rather to **have their ears tickled** with unbiblical notions that raise their comfort level, justify, and overlook their sins.

They also reject as unloving/anyone who presumes to hold them accountable to doctrinal beliefs and moral standards they deem outdated and out of touch.

Consequently, the preacher whom they least like to hear brings the message they need most to hear.

These are all evidences of serious compromise. Ears tickled, they want to be entertained, pleasant feelings, humor, reassurance, positive thinking.

The Word of God doesn't tickle ears—it boxes them, it burns them

- In doing so, they **turn away their ears from the truth.**

What will they turn to?

#4 – Myths/fables – vs. 4

The phrase here was used medically to refer to a dislocated joint.

The minds and hearts of those who reject God's truth become spiritually dislocated, out of joint.

When God's **truth** is knowingly rejected, Satan's falsehood is inevitably, though often unknowingly, embraced.

In other words, deliberate rejection of God's truth makes a person vulnerable to Satan's **myths.**

Many churches today are filled to overflowing with those who want their ears tickled with the **myths** of easy-believism, self-esteem, faith healers, and positive thinking.

They come to have their egos fed and their sins approved, not to have their hearts cleansed and their souls saved.

They want only to feel good, not to be made good.

Tragically, such fables serve to religiously insulate people from the true Gospel and drive them still further from the Lord.

These are the times, these are they styles, this is the fashion—this is contemporary thinking

Yes, but it is all bubble

These fables/myths are bubbles, that a child blows in the springtime.

- Romanism, Seventh Day Adventists, Christian Scientism, Masonism, Mormonism—**pop**—all the isms and asms and the usms and spasms—**pop, pop, pop**—they're gone!

It will be wonderful—won't it?—when Christ returns!

All the isms will be wusims—gone!

The time will come—future

God commands Timothy and every church to preach the Word faithfully, reprovngly, patiently, and let it confront the spirit of the age head on.

We notice in this text that nothing God said to Timothy has anything to do with how people might respond.

The emphasis here is on commitment not success

Contemporary ministry philosophy is loaded with worldly standards of success.

- The fact that people love it doesn't make it right.
- Popular does not mean pleasing to God

The Bible does not need to be revised; it needs to be reverbalized.

God's church at Medora needs to be Savior pleasing, not people pleasing.
Verses 3 and 4 are a warning to us not to compromise.
Instead, we need to be courageous in the times we live in.

Let us stand for closing invitation.

Are we nominal Christians? In name only?

Do we have our eyes on the world's way of church or on God's way?

Are we turning away from the truth of God's Word?

Gospel

This is a prophecy—Timothy, there is coming a time when people will not want to hear

Just because people do not like us – call us names – do we acquiesce to that? No.